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Wednesday, 23 April 2014, 9.30 a.m.
New York

President:	Mrs. Ogwu	(Nigeria)
Members:	Argentina	Mrs. Perceval
	Australia	Mr. Quinlan
	Chad	Mr. Mangaral
	Chile	Mr. Barros
	China	Mr. Liu Jieyi
	France	Mr. Araud
	Jordan	Mr. Hmoud
	Lithuania	Ms. Murmokaitė
	Luxembourg	Mr. Maes
	Republic of Korea	Ms. Paik Ji-ah
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Rwanda	Mr. Nduhungirehe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Wilson
	United States of America	Ms. Power

Agenda

The situation in Mali

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali (S/2014/229)

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The meeting was called to order at 9.35 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Mali

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali (S/2014/229)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Mali to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome His Excellency Mr. Abdoulaye Diop, Minister for Foreign Affairs, African Integration and International Cooperation of the Republic of Mali.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Albert Koenders, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Mali and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2014/229, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali.

I now give the floor to Mr. Koenders.

Mr. Koenders (*spoke in French*): It is a great pleasure and honour to address the Security Council today. I would like to give the Council an overview of the political and security situation in Mali, the progress made since my briefing on 16 January (see S/PV.7095) and the challenges ahead.

The Malian people have continued to show their determination to move forward through the inauguration of the new National Assembly and the gradual return of the public administration in the northern region. The establishment of a new Government has given new impetus to the peace process under way.

Furthermore, the President of Mali has just announced the appointment of former Prime Minister Modibo Keita as high representative for inclusive talks in the framework of the preliminary agreement. In that context, the commitment to an inclusive political dialogue remains the top priority and must start as soon as possible on the basis of a timeline accepted by all parties. Also, it is important to agree a road map that is acceptable to everyone, which absolutely must be translated into concrete actions by the Government, the movements and civil society, with the support and involvement of the United Nations and the international community.

The general principles for cantonment are laid out in a consensus document that serves as a reference in the ongoing peace process. Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States welcomed the signing of those principles at the recent conference held in Yamoussoukro and urged all signatories of the preliminary agreement to ensure its full implementation. They also reiterated their call to all armed movements to submit to the cantonment and participate in the search for a peaceful settlement of disputes, in the framework of an inclusive national dialogue.

In the meantime, we have begun to identify the priority cantonment sites for the armed movements. However, the responsibility for the implementation of the general principles on cantonment lies with the parties, with the support of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and the international community to ensure supervision and the integrity of the process.

It is essential that all sectors of Malian society, including women and young people, continue to actively participate in all efforts to define the next steps in the process of re-establishing peace and security. The forums in Bamako and in the North, as well as the recent informal workshops, have been positive developments in the peace process. However, I deplore the lack of consistency and the refusal of some armed movements to take the opportunity offered by these informal discussions to advance the peace process.

The peace train has left the station for good and there can be no turning back. For the next stages of the ongoing peace process, the stakeholders in the preliminary agreement must be resolved to participate in a constructive and inclusive process without preconditions, since the ongoing informal discussions must move towards inclusive formal talks. To that end, it is essential that the armed movements strengthen their internal cohesion and their respective positions. Time is passing; there are no more excuses.

(*spoke in English*)

Mali has made significant strides and the support of the international community has been critical to that. I particularly applaud the cooperation, under the aegis of the United Nations, with the African Union, ECOWAS, the European Union and other key partners. That cooperation must continue in order to ensure the appropriate support for ongoing efforts to achieve peace and stability. At this critical juncture, the multiplication of international facilitation initiatives should lead to synergies and build trust between and among the parties, provided the initiatives are closely aligned with the ongoing United Nations-coordinated efforts on the ground towards inclusive talks.

The window of opportunity for consolidating and sustaining peace and stability in Mali is wide open, but it may close unless the sustained commitment of all stakeholders is upheld, with the support of the international community. This is all the more important as the security situation in the northern regions remains very fragile, as illustrated by the shellings in Gao, Timbuktu and Kidal, and the increased activity of terrorist groups. I strongly condemn this morning's incident in which a peacekeeper was severely wounded by an improvised explosive device during an international visit.

Not only does this negative trend have an impact on the situation in Kidal and elsewhere, it can also thwart efforts towards early recovery and development. The most effective way to root out all extremism from communities is to win the hearts and minds of the local population. That will require concerted national efforts, with the international community's support, to ensure the establishment of an effective and efficient administration that can implement critical rule-of-law, human-rights and recovery programmes that foster reconciliation and community cohesiveness.

I am deeply concerned about the intercommunity clashes in the northern regions. The sheer violence of the recent incidents involving Tuareg and Peuhl communities that resulted in 40 casualties in Gao is worrying. MINUSMA has deployed forces and human rights teams to establish the facts and discourage further violence. Faced with continued considerable threats to the Malian population, the Government is continuing to hold grass-roots consultations, in particular in the North, and intercommunity meetings, including in collaboration with the Government of Niger. These clashes are stark reminders of the fragility of the social fabric and the importance of fast-tracking the reconciliation process and strengthening the presence of national and international forces on the ground, as well as launching the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme.

Above and beyond all this, the problems of Mali are embedded in the Sahel region and require regional support and coordination to be effectively addressed. I remain worried about the food-security situation in the country, and call on donors to heed the humanitarian appeal. The United Nations strategy for the Sahel and the various mechanisms established to support its implementation are steps in the right direction. However, the proof of the strategy rests on the willingness of the countries concerned to own and implement it in a concerted and operational manner, as well as on its positive impact on the livelihoods of the population as a whole.

The successful negotiations to reach a final peace settlement in Mali and the effectiveness of development spending — which should be discussed in Bamako next week as a follow-up to last year's Brussels conference — are interrelated; they illustrate the close nexus between development and security in the Malian case and should be recognized as such. We will soon discuss issues related to the possible renewal of the Mission's mandate. There are signs of hope that Mali can overcome its multifaceted crisis; we should not, however, underestimate the risks and difficulties of the road ahead. The Malians faced a deep crisis with direct consequences for security in the Sahel region and globally, which continues to require our focused attention.

The President: I thank Mr. Koenders for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, African Integration and International Cooperation of the Republic of Mali.

Mr. Diop (Mali) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to offer you my warm congratulations, Madam, on the Federal Republic of Nigeria's accession to the presidency of the Council for the month of April, and to express our appreciation for the outstanding way in which Luxembourg led the work of the Council last month.

I would also like to thank the Secretary-General and his Special Representative for the work his team

is doing on the ground and for the quality of the report presented to the Council this morning (S/2014/229).

I think it would be useful to call the Council's attention to some developments that have occurred in Mali since 16 January, when the Secretary-General's third report (S/2014/1) on the implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) was presented (see S/PV.7095). Those changes are related particularly to the political process, security, stabilization, the strengthening of State authority, human rights, economic recovery and reconstruction projects, the humanitarian situation, international coordination and MINUSMA.

As the report prepared pursuant to resolution 2100 (2013) and under review today indicates, remarkable progress has been made in the negotiations between the Government and armed groups, thanks to the support of our partners. For its part, the Malian Government is determined to spare no effort to reach a definitive solution to the crisis affecting the North of Mali that respects our sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity. The Government will pursue those efforts with the support of the international community, including MINUSMA, whose mandate, I recall, is designed to strengthen the Malian Government in order to enable it to assert its sovereignty over the whole of its national territory, without exception.

In that regard, the Government and MINUSMA have conducted joint preparations for inclusive peace talks by organizing a series of workshops and activities on lessons learned from previous agreements; cantonment and the demobilization, disarmament and reintegration (DDR) process; reinstatement of the administration and the resumption of social services; women and young people's national days of action for peace and national reconciliation. The workshop on the DDR process has resulted in a document on preparing for cantonment, signed by representatives of the Government, MINUSMA and armed groups, which focuses on the objectives, principles, eligibility criteria, cantonment sites, procedures, logistical and financial resources and the timing of the process's implementation. It is based on resolution 2100 (2013), the Ouagadougou agreement of 18 June 2013 and recommendations made as a result of the Security Council visit to Mali from 1 to 3 February. The Council's visit and that of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon from 4 to 6 November last year were yet further demonstrations of the international community's solidarity with Mali, a country rich in history and cultural diversity that is resolutely committed to a future of solidarity through the inclusion of every element in the country.

In support of the joint actions of our Government and MINUSMA, the President and Head of State of Mali, Mr. Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, has been in talks with the supreme authorities of Mali's neighbours and other countries of the region, including Algeria and Morocco, who have expressed their willingness to work towards peaceful resolution of the problems in northern Mali.

My delegation fully agrees with the observation made by the Secretary-General in paragraph 69 of his report, deploring the fact that some armed groups have demonstrated a lack of consistency or refused to take the opportunity offered by the informal talks in the process aimed at emerging from the crisis. While it is clear that this lack of consistency has helped to slow the development of constructive and inclusive dialogue leading to formal negotiations, it is also true, as noted in the report under consideration, that there can be no lasting solution to the security problems in the north of Mali in the absence of an inclusive political process that paves the way for the restoration of public order, equal access for all Malians to public services and reconciliation among communities.

The Government of Mali therefore once again calls for restraint and good faith in order to enable us to reach the goal of peace as soon as possible, to which the Government remains strongly attached. That is why Mali's President, His Excellency Mr. Boubacar Keita, since the formation of the new Government, on 5 April, of which I am part and which is headed by Prime Minister Moussa Mara, has pledged to work diligently to achieve peace and security throughout the whole country, including the north of Mali.

Along the same lines, the Head of State has reiterated the commitment of the Government of Mali to respecting the Ouagadougou Agreement, including the provisions of article 21 thereof. In that regard, the country has just entrusted the conduct of talks with the rebel groups to former Prime Minister Modibo Keita, a person whose sense of State and country, integrity and political courage are well known. It is understood that the talks will be held, as mentioned earlier, in respect of the unity and territorial integrity of Mali and in accordance with resolution 2100 (2013).

My delegation also shares security and humanitarian concerns mentioned in the report of the Secretary-General, including the resumption of activities by terrorist groups, mainly Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb and the Mouvement pour l'unicité et le jihad en Afrique de l'ouest (MUJAO), using improvised explosive devices and rockets against the Malian armed forces, MINUSMA and the forces of Operation Serval in the north of Mali. In addition, the Government of Mali is particularly concerned by the deteriorating situation in Kidal and other northern communities owing to various instances of intercommunal violence.

With regard to MINUSMA, my delegation regrets the low level of force generation and the lack of attack helicopters and military transport in a context marked by the intensification of the activities of terrorist groups, the most notorious of which to date was the murder of the French hostage Gilberto Rodrigues Leal, which MUJAO has claimed. Against that tragic backdrop, through me, the Government of Mali condemns in the strongest possible terms this heinous act, which belongs to another era. We commit ourselves to deploy all efforts to hunt down, arrest and prosecute the perpetrators. To the Government and the people of France and to the family of Mr. Rodrigues Leal, we extend our most sincere condolences. We are praying for the repose of the soul of the deceased and all those who before him paid with their lives for their commitment to a better world free of terrorism and violent extremism.

Similarly, we condemn this morning's terrorist attack in Kidal. That event serves to underscore the urgency of speeding up the deployment of MINUSMA and providing it with adequate means to carry out its mission alongside Mali's armed forces and the French forces. My delegation also supports the Secretary-General's call on the international community, Member States and donor countries for a significant increase in their support to Mali's armed forces and for the scaling up of adequate resources and troop deployments to MINUSMA to enable it to build its force in order to fully carry out its mandate.

The situation in Mali is symptomatic of the challenges that the countries of the region face. My delegation agrees with the importance of strengthening international coordination and regional cooperation within the framework of the implementation of the United Nations integrated strategy for Sahel. To that end, the first ministerial meeting on the establishment of a coordination platform for the strategy was held in Bamako on 5 November 2013. The aim of the meeting was to identify common priorities in the areas of security, governance, resilience and regional infrastructure in order to better shape the implementation of the strategy and the efforts of other multilateral and bilateral partners in the region.

In its capacity as Chair of the plaform for the coordination of the strategy, Mali will very soon convene the second ministerial meeting, during which we will present a road map aimed at generating a reasonable level of sustainability in support in addressing the problems to be resolved, keeping the focus on the major challenges in the Sahel region continues to face, adopting shared priorities for regional initiatives in the Sahel, and monitoring the progress achieved, including through coordinated support by the international community as represented by the States Members of the United Nations. The actions envisaged will also help to build confidence among the countries of the region and improve coordination among international partners in order to address the multidimensional threats affecting the region.

I cannot conclude without thanking, on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Mali, the Economic Community of West African States, particularly its retiring President, His Excellency Mr. Alassane Ouattara, President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, His Excellency Mr. Blaise Compaoré, President of Burkina Faso, and His Excellency Mr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, for their leadership in managing the crisis in Mali .

To conclude, I would like to reiterate the Government of Mali's appreciation to the African Union, the United Nations, the European Union, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, France, Chad and all countries contributing troops and equipment to MINUSMA for their eminently important role they continue to play in bringing permanent peace and stability back to Mali and the entire region.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 10 a.m.